

SERVICE DATE – OCTOBER 7, 2026

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423**

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Docket No. AB-55 (Sub-No. 823X)

**CSX Transportation, Inc. – Abandonment Exemption –
In Hamilton County, Ohio**

BACKGROUND

In this proceeding, CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT) filed a notice of exemption with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) under 49 C.F.R. § 1152.50 seeking exemption from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. § 10903 in connection with the abandonment of a line of railroad in Hamilton County, Ohio. The rail line proposed for abandonment extends approximately 2.07 miles from milepost BEK 2.24 to milepost BEK 4.31 (the Line). A map depicting the Line in relationship to the area served is appended to this Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA). If the notice becomes effective, the railroad will be able to salvage track, ties and other railroad appurtenances and to dispose of the right-of-way.

DESCRIPTION OF THE LINE

The Line, also known as CSXT's Midwest Region, Cincinnati Terminal-Industrial Track Subdivision, runs on the west side of Mill Creek, generally parallel to State Avenue and Beekman Street, and extends north to Fricke Road. According to CSXT, the Line is part of the former Baltimore and Ohio Railroad ("B&O") industrial line in Cincinnati, Ohio. It was built to serve lumber, warehousing, and other industrial customers from Queensgate Yard. The portion of the former B&O line north of Fricke Road, was formally abandoned in 1993. Over the last decade, the Line has experienced a gradual decline in railserved customers and freight activity. The B&O line has been part of the CSXT network since 1987.

CSXT believes the right-of-way may be suitable for other public uses following abandonment and is also suitable for interim trail use/rail banking under 49 C.F.R. § 1152.29. There are no stations on the Line. According to CSXT, the Line contains no federally granted rights-of-way. CSXT reports eight crossings on the Line, all presently closed: two public road crossings, four private road crossings, and two pedestrian pathways. The Line traverses U.S. Postal ZIP codes 45204, 45214, 45223, and 45225.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

CSXT submitted a combined environmental and historic report (E&H Report) that concludes the quality of the human environment would not be affected significantly as a result of the proposed abandonment of the Line, including salvage. CSXT served the E&H Report on a number of appropriate federal, state, and local agencies as required by the Board's environmental rules [49 C.F.R. § 1105.7(b)]¹ implementing the National Environmental Policy Act. The Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) has reviewed and investigated the record in this proceeding.

Diversion of Traffic

According to CSXT, no local traffic has moved over the Line over the last two years, and overhead traffic on the Line has been rerouted. Therefore the proposed abandonment would not result in the diversion of rail traffic to truck traffic that could result in significant impacts to air quality or the local transportation network. Nor would the proposed abandonment adversely impact the development, use and transportation of energy resources or recyclable commodities or the transportation of ozone-depleting materials.

Salvage Activities

Impacts from salvage and disposal of a rail line typically include removal of tracks and ties, removal of ballast, dismantling of any bridges or other structures that may be present on the rail right-of-way, and regrading of the right-of-way. Salvage may be performed within the right-of-way, or, if necessary, via the construction of new access points to the right-of-way. CSXT states that abandonment of the Line would result in removal of remaining rail and crossties and possibly the upper layer of ballast. CSXT does not intend to disturb any subgrade or subgrade structures. Any potential trail-related structures, such as bridges, trestles, culverts, and tunnels, would not be salvaged. Salvage activities would be conducted using the existing right-of-way and crossings for access, with no new access roads contemplated.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) submitted comments stating that the proposed rail line abandonment would not have any negative detriment to any agricultural land or prime farmland in the area.

¹ The E&H Report is available for viewing on the Board's website at www.stb.gov by clicking "Search STB Records;" selecting "Filings" in the "Search for" dropdown menu; entering "AB" "55" "823" "X" sequentially in the four boxes for "Docket Number," then selecting "Search." The E&H Report was filed on September 8, 2026.

CSXT does not intend to appreciably remove or alter the contour of the roadbed underlying the Line, and disturbed areas would be limited to the right-of-way wherever possible. CSXT also has no plans to undertake in-stream work or dredge and/or fill any materials in connection with the proposed abandonment. However, the Line appears to pass through 100-year floodplains. Accordingly, OEA is sending the appropriate offices of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) a copy of this Draft EA for their review.

CSXT requested comments from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding the potential impact of the proposed abandonment to protected wildlife, including federally listed threatened and endangered species. USFWS submitted comments stating that due to the project type, size, and location, USFWS does not have any concerns regarding federally endangered, threatened, or proposed species or proposed or designated critical habitat. Therefore, OEA has determined that the proposed abandonment would have no impact on federally listed threatened and endangered species. OEA is providing the USFWS, Ohio Ecological Services Field Office a copy of this Draft EA for its review.

The proposed abandonment is not located within Ohio's Coastal Zone Management Program; therefore a review for consistency with Ohio's State Coastal Zone Management Program is not required.

OEA believes that any air emissions associated with abandonment activities would be temporary and would not have a significant impact on air quality. Similarly, any noise related to abandonment activities would also be temporary and should not have a significant impact on the area surrounding the proposed abandonment.

Based on all information available to date, OEA does not believe that the proposed abandonment would cause significant environmental impacts. In addition to the parties on the Board's service list for this proceeding, OEA is providing a copy of this Draft EA to the following agencies for review and comment: Corps, FEMA, and USFWS Ohio Ecological Services Field Office.

HISTORIC REVIEW

CSXT served the E&H Report on the Ohio History Connection (State Historic Preservation Office or SHPO), pursuant to 49 C.F.R. § 1105.8(c).² Based on available

² Applicants seeking authority from the Board to abandon railroad lines may act on behalf of the Board when complying with the Section 106 regulations of the National Historic Preservation Act. Applicants are authorized to initiate the Section 106 review process and carry

information, the SHPO has submitted comments stating that no historic properties listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) would be affected within the right-of-way (the Area of Potential Effect, or APE) of the proposed abandonment.

Pursuant to the Section 106 regulations of the National Historic Preservation Act at 36 C.F.R. § 800.4(d)(1), and following consultation with the SHPO and the public, OEA has determined that the proposed abandonment would not affect historic properties listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register. The documentation for this finding, as specified at 36 C.F.R. § 800.11(d), consists of CSXT's historic report, all relevant correspondence, and this Draft EA, which have been provided to the SHPO and made available to the public through posting on the Board's website at www.stb.gov. Guidance regarding the Board's historic preservation review process is available on the Board's website at <https://www.stb.gov/resources/environmental/historic-preservation-overview>.

Pursuant to 36 C.F.R. § 800.2, OEA conducted a search of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Tribal Directory Assessment Tool (TDAT) to identify federally recognized Tribes that may have ancestral connections to the project area.³ The database indicated that the following federally-recognized tribes may have knowledge regarding properties of traditional religious and cultural significance within the right-of-way (the APE) of the proposed abandonment: the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, the Osage Nation, and the Seneca-Cayuga Nation. Accordingly, OEA is sending a copy of this Draft EA to these Tribes for review and comment.

CONDITIONS

OEA recommends that no environmental conditions be imposed on any decision granting abandonment authority.

out some of its steps, but the Board retains overall responsibility for the Section 106 review. See 36 C.F.R. § 800.2(c)(4); 49 C.F.R. Part 1105; Delegation Letter (Dec. 9, 2009). The Delegation Letter can be found at a link on the bottom of the Board's website overviewing historic preservation at <https://www.stb.gov/resources/environmental/historic-preservation-overview>.

³ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Tribal Directory Assessment Tool, <https://egis.hud.gov/tdat> (last accessed October 6, 2026).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information provided from all sources to date, OEA concludes that, as currently proposed, abandonment of the Line will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the environmental impact statement process is unnecessary.

Alternatives to the proposed abandonment would include denial (and therefore no change in operations), discontinuance of service without abandonment, and continued operation by another operator. In any of these cases, the existing quality of the human environment and energy consumption should not be affected.

PUBLIC USE

Following abandonment and salvage of the rail line, the right-of-way may be suitable for other public use. A request containing the requisite four-part showing for imposition of a public use condition (49 C.F.R. § 1152.28) must be filed with the Board and served on the railroad within the time specified in the Board's Federal Register notice of the proposed abandonment. The Federal Register notice is also issued as a Board decision and is available on the Board's website.⁴

TRAIL USE

A request for a notice of interim trail use (NITU) is due to the Board, with a copy to the railroad, within 10 days of publication of the notice of exemption in the Federal Register. Nevertheless, the Board will accept late-filed requests as long as it retains jurisdiction to do so in a particular case. This request must comply with the Board's rules for use of rights-of-way as trails (49 C.F.R. § 1152.29). The Federal Register notice is also issued as a Board decision and is available on the Board's website.⁵

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

The Board's Office of Public Assistance, Governmental Affairs, and Compliance responds to questions regarding interim trail use, public use, and other reuse alternatives. You

⁴ Board decisions are available for viewing on the Board's website at www.stb.gov by clicking "Search STB Records;" selecting "Decisions" in the "Search for" dropdown menu; entering "AB" "55" "823" "X" sequentially in the four boxes for "Docket Number," then selecting "Search."

⁵ Id.

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may contact this office directly at (202) 245-0238, or mail inquiries to Surface Transportation Board, Office of Public Assistance, Governmental Affairs, and Compliance, Washington, DC 20423.

COMMENTS

OEA encourages interested parties to submit their comments on the Draft EA electronically through the Board's website at <https://www.stb.gov/>. From the Board's home page, scroll down to the blue "How to File" box. Select the "E-Filing (recommended)" button. From the E-Filing page, select "Environmental Comments" under "Select your E-Filing Type." Log-in accounts are not needed to file environmental comments electronically, and brief comments can be typed in the comment field, and lengthier comments can be attached as Word, Adobe Acrobat, or other file formats.

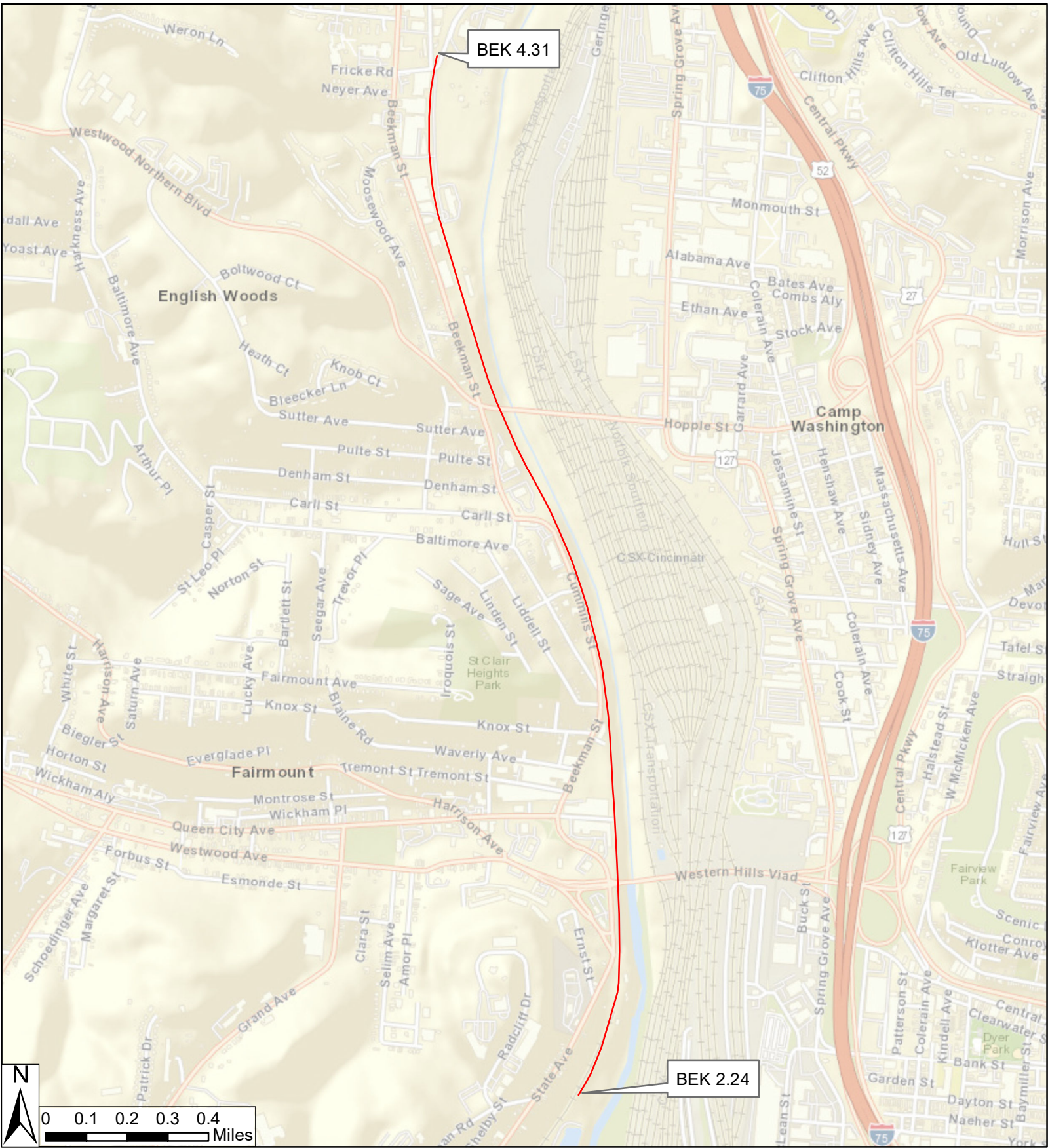
Alternatively, comments submitted by mail should be addressed to: Adam Assenza, Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20423-0001, Attention: Environmental Filing, Docket No. AB 55 (Sub-No. 823X). If you have any questions, please contact Adam Assenza by email at adam.assenza@stb.gov or by phone at 202-245-0301.

Date made available to the public: October 7, 2026.

Comment due date: October 22, 2026 .

By the Board, Danielle Gosselin, Director, Office of Environmental Analysis.

Attachment



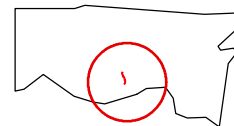
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Legend

— the Line

Note: Maps produced by the STB's Office of Environmental Analysis are based on information provided by the applicant and are for reference purposes only.



Hamilton County



Ohio